

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WESTERN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE does not review all books sent to it by the publishers. A list of new books received is carried in the Advertising Section.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT ACNE—John R. T. Reeves, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor of Dermatology, University of California, San Francisco; Assistant Chief of Dermatology, San Francisco General Hospital. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ (07632), 1977. 111 pages, \$5.95.

Written for lay persons, this book discusses acne in exhaustive detail. This is accomplished through a clearly written question-and-answer format. The book is divided into sections concerning pathogenesis and treatment of acne, and also discusses selection of doctors and pharmacies. There is a complete glossary and index.

In the sections on pathogenesis, relevant medical knowledge is reviewed in an understandable manner. Lay misconceptions are discussed and dealt with persuasively. Cosmetics are listed that purportedly do and do not plug pores.

The treatment section covers all systemic and topical medications, as well as office procedures for treating patients with acne. Medications are listed by brand and generic names, with average 1977 prices given. Side effects of the medications and procedures are covered briefly but completely. A short final section summarizes treatment recommendations for various types and grades of acne.

This reviewer is enthusiastic about this type do-it-yourself educational approach for patients. After physicians (particularly general practitioners, pediatricians and dermatologists) read it, they can decide whether to make the book available in their offices. Many patients will read it through their schools. You may find an advanced reading will help in your relationship with patients having acne.

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HANDBOOK OF PEDIATRICS—Twelfth Edition—Henry K. Silver, MD, Professor of Pediatrics; C. Henry Kempe, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Microbiology, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Denver; and Henry B. Bruyn, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics, University of California, San Francisco; Director of Child Health and Disability Prevention, City and County of San Francisco. Lange Medical Publications, Drawer L, Los Altos, CA (94022), 1977. 721 pages, \$9.00

The fact that this handbook is now in its 12th edition offers ample testimony of its usefulness to medical students and physicians in pediatric training, and to practicing physicians as well. Each edition has been carefully reviewed and updated, and the authors have succeeded in retaining an emphasis on the clinical aspects of these subjects covered and have included appropriate background information and new developments in the field. Although the size of the volume limits both the extent and depth of coverage, the convenience of its small size is one of its major advantages. It can and should be read during the first week of pediatric training.

The book itself is divided into 32 chapters covering topics such as the pediatric history and physical examination, the management of children during illness, landmarks of growth and development, and the like. Chapters also include emotional problems, adolescence, the various systems of the body and major disease categories. The appendix includes topics such as drug therapy, dosage information, and various normal and abnormal values. The checklist for pediatric screening procedures is particularly useful. Several tables are included which provide

summaries of causes, diagnosis and therapy, thereby summarizing information for the benefit of clinicians. A complete and accurate index adds to the value of this manual.

This useful volume should be in the office of each physician who cares for children, and can be recommended to each student of medicine.

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EMERGENCIES IN MEDICAL PRACTICE—Tenth Edition—Edited by C. Allan Birch, MD, FRCP, Honorary Consulting Physician, Chase Farm Hospital, Enfield, Middlesex. Churchill Livingstone—Medical Division, Longman, Inc., 19 West 44th St., New York City (10036), 1976. 864 pages, \$38.00.

Comprehensive reference textbooks have been published in most medical specialties. In the field of internal medicine, two works—one edited by Harrison and the other by Beeson and McDermott—have achieved the status of definitive reference texts through years of use by internists and frequent revisions reflecting new knowledge and updated standards of medical practice. In emergency medicine, which has only recently developed as a specialty, a comparable reference text has not yet emerged, although at least two comprehensive works have been scheduled for publication in the United States during 1978.

The tenth edition of Dr. Birch's textbook does not meet the needs of a physician working in an emergency department in the United States. The book does not contain a separate chapter on traumatic emergencies. The chapter on medicolegal emergencies is irrelevant to the American experience. A condition which is seen quite commonly here, sickle cell crisis, is cursorily treated in a few short paragraphs. Drug names are generally unfamiliar and some (for example, heroin) are not even available to physicians here. The appendices contain lists of addresses and telephone numbers of facilities supplying services as diverse as hyperbaric oxygen, anthrax information, immunoglobulins and foreign language translation; but the vast majority of these are in Great Britain.

Some of the chapters, such as those on emergencies at sea and emergencies in the air and the section on techniques of embalming, may be relevant to physicians in certain isolated clinical situations. The sections on procedures tend to be rather simplistic (for example, technique of venipuncture) but a few (such as technique of costal puncture and of stellate ganglion block) are beyond the scope of usual American emergency medical practice.

Emergencies in Medical Practice has survived ten editions in Great Britain but it cannot serve as a useful reference text for physicians confronted with emergencies in the United States.

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